

Serial No. 10/001,257 filed 11/27/2001

Amendment dated July 7, 2005

Response to Notice of Allowance of 04/07/2005

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claims 1-70 (cancelled)

71. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

- (a) providing a no-spill drinking apparatus, said apparatus being provided for a user to drink liquid out of, and to prevent accidental spilling of liquid by the user;
- (b) said no-spill drinking apparatus comprising a cap, said cap further comprising a spout, said cap being provided for the user to drink liquid from said spout, and to prevent spilling of liquid out of said spout when the user is not drinking from said spout;
- (c) said cap comprising a valve, said valve comprising a flexible material, said flexible material comprising an opening therein;
- (d) said apparatus comprising a blocking element below said flexible material;
- (e) wherein said opening of said flexible material rests against said blocking element when the user is not drinking from said spout;
- (f) wherein said flexible material rises off of said blocking element, unblocking said opening, when the user sucks through said spout to drink from said spout;
- (g) and wherein said apparatus is designed to allow air into said apparatus, said cap comprising ~~an air vent~~ a hole for air, such that when the user sucks through said spout, liquid passes through said opening and out of said spout, and air passes through said ~~vent~~ hole for air and into said apparatus;
- (h) and wherein said apparatus comprises a flow bridge, said flow bridge being a barrier above said flexible material which blocks said flexible material from moving beyond a maximum distance after said flexible material rises off of said blocking element.

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72. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 71, wherein said opening is a hole.
73. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 71, wherein said opening is a slit.
74. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 71, wherein said apparatus further comprises a valve holder, said valve holder being separable from said cap and being dimensioned to fit snugly into said cap.
75. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 71, wherein said flexible material of said valve comprises a sidewall portion of material having a first thickness, and wherein the ~~comprises a center~~ area of said flexible material which seals against said blocking element is provided with a thickness of material which is greater than said first thickness.
76. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 71, wherein said spout of said cap is soft, and wherein said cap further comprises a hard section for attachment to a cup.
77. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 71, wherein said apparatus further comprises:
- (a) a valve holder, said valve holder being separable from said cap and being dimensioned to fit snugly into said cap;
 - (b) wherein said flexible material of said valve comprises a sidewall portion of material having a first thickness, and wherein the ~~comprises a center~~ area of said flexible material which seals against said blocking element is provided with a thickness of material which is greater than said first thickness;
 - (c) and wherein said apparatus comprises a cup, and said cup is hard.
78. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 71, wherein said apparatus is provided for drinking by a child, and to prevent accidental spilling of liquid by the child.
79. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 71, wherein said apparatus comprises a cup.
80. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 77, wherein said apparatus is provided for drinking by a child, and to prevent accidental spilling of liquid by the child.

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81. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 77, wherein said spout of said cap is soft, and wherein said cap further comprises a hard section for attachment to a cup.
82. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:
- (a) providing a no-spill drinking apparatus, said apparatus being provided for a user to drink liquid out of, and to prevent accidental spilling of liquid by the user;
 - (b) said no-spill drinking apparatus comprising a cap, said cap comprising a spout, said cap being provided for the user to drink liquid from said spout, and to prevent spilling of liquid out of said spout when the user is not drinking from said spout;
 - (c) said cap comprising a valve, said valve comprising a flexible material, said flexible material comprising an opening therein;
 - (d) said apparatus comprising a blocking element below said flexible material;
 - (e) wherein said opening of said flexible material rests against said blocking element when the user is not drinking from said spout;
 - (f) and wherein said flexible material rises off of said blocking element, unblocking said opening, when the user sucks through said spout to drink from said spout;
 - (g) wherein said flexible material comprises the shape of a bowl, said bowl having a top and a bottom, said opening being located in said bottom, said bowl being initially upright when said opening rests against said blocking element;
 - (h) and wherein said flexible material begins to invert when the user sucks through said spout, such that said bottom of said bowl moves toward said top of said bowl, with said opening in said bottom moving toward said top of said bowl, to allow liquid to exit through said opening;
 - (i) and wherein said cap further comprises ~~an air vent~~ a hole for air, such that when the user sucks through said spout, liquid passes through said opening and out of said spout, and air passes through said ~~air vent~~ hole for air and into said apparatus.

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83. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 82, wherein said opening is a hole.
84. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 82, wherein said opening is a slit.
85. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 82, wherein said apparatus further comprising a valve holder, said valve holder being separable from said cap and being dimensioned to fit snugly into said cap.
86. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 82, wherein said flexible material of said valve comprises a sidewall portion of material having a first thickness, and wherein the ~~comprises a center~~ area of said flexible material which seals against said blocking element is provided with a thickness of material which is greater than said first thickness.
87. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 82, wherein said spout of said cap is soft, and wherein said cap further comprises a hard section for attachment to a cup.
88. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 82, wherein said apparatus further comprises:
- (a) a valve holder, said valve holder being separable from said cap and being dimensioned to fit snugly into said cap;
 - (b) wherein said flexible material of said valve comprises a sidewall portion of material having a first thickness, and wherein the ~~comprises a center~~ area of said flexible material which seals against said blocking element is provided with a thickness of material which is greater than said first thickness;
 - (c) and wherein said apparatus comprises a cup, and said cup is hard.
89. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 82, wherein said apparatus is provided for drinking by a child, and to prevent accidental spilling of liquid by the child.

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90. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 88, wherein said apparatus is provided for drinking by a child, and to prevent accidental spilling of liquid by the child.
91. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 88, wherein said spout of said cap is soft, and wherein said cap further comprises a hard section for attachment to a cup.
92. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 82, wherein said apparatus comprises a cup.
93. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 82, wherein said apparatus further comprises:
- (a) a valve holder, said valve holder being separable from said cap and being dimensioned to fit snugly into said cap;
 - (b) wherein said flexible material of said valve comprises a sidewall portion of material having a first thickness, and wherein the comprises a center area of said flexible material which seals against said blocking element is provided with a thickness of material which is greater than said first thickness;
 - (c) and wherein said spout of said cap is soft, and said cap further comprises a hard section for attachment to a cup.
94. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 71, ~~wherein said air vent comprises a hole which is open on the bottom, and which, on the opposing side merges into a surface of said cap~~ wherein said flexible material begins to invert when the user sucks through said spout.
95. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 77, wherein said air vent comprises a hole which is open on the bottom, and which, on the opposing side merges into a surface of said cap~~ claim 72, wherein said flexible material begins to invert when the user sucks through said spout.

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96. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 82~~, wherein said air vent comprises a ~~hole which is open on the bottom, and which, on the opposing side merges into a surface of~~ said cap claim 73, wherein said flexible material begins to invert when the user sucks through said spout.
97. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 87~~, wherein said air vent comprises a ~~hole which is open on the bottom, and which, on the opposing side merges into a surface of~~ said cap claim 74, wherein said flexible material begins to invert when the user sucks through said spout.
98. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 88~~, wherein said air vent comprises a ~~hole which is open on the bottom, and which, on the opposing side merges into a surface of~~ said cap claim 75, wherein said flexible material begins to invert when the user sucks through said spout.
99. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 91~~, wherein said air vent comprises a ~~hole which is open on the bottom, and which, on the opposing side merges into a surface of~~ said cap claim 76, wherein said flexible material begins to invert when the user sucks through said spout.
100. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 71~~, wherein said apparatus comprises a ~~cross-bar in contact with said flexible material~~ claim 77, wherein said flexible material begins to invert when the user sucks through said spout.
101. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 77~~, wherein said apparatus comprises a ~~cross-bar in contact with said flexible material~~ claim 78, wherein said flexible material begins to invert when the user sucks through said spout.

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102. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 82~~, wherein said apparatus comprises a cross-bar in contact with said flexible material claim 79, wherein said flexible material begins to invert when the user sucks through said spout.
103. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 87~~, wherein said apparatus comprises a cross-bar in contact with said flexible material claim 80, wherein said flexible material begins to invert when the user sucks through said spout.
104. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 88~~, wherein said apparatus comprises a cross-bar in contact with said flexible material claim 71, wherein said apparatus further comprises a second valve, said second valve comprising a second opening and a second blocking element, wherein said second blocking element blocks the flow of air through said second opening when the user is not sucking at said spout, and wherein said second opening is unblocked to allow air to pass through said second opening when the user sucks at said spout.
105. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 91~~ wherein said apparatus comprises a cross-bar in contact with said flexible material claim 77, wherein said apparatus further comprises a second valve, said second valve comprising a second opening and a second blocking element, wherein said second blocking element blocks the flow of air through said second opening when the user is not sucking at said spout, and wherein said second opening is unblocked to allow air to pass through said second opening when the user sucks at said spout.
106. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 94~~, wherein said apparatus comprises a cross-bar in contact with said flexible material claim 80, wherein said apparatus further

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comprises a second valve, said second valve comprising a second opening and a second blocking element, wherein said second blocking element blocks the flow of air through said second opening when the user is not sucking at said spout, and wherein said second opening is unblocked to allow air to pass through said second opening when the user sucks at said spout.

107. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 95~~, wherein ~~said apparatus comprises a cross-bar in contact with said flexible material~~ claim 82, wherein said apparatus further comprises a second valve, said second valve comprising a second opening and a second blocking element, wherein said second blocking element blocks the flow of air through said second opening when the user is not sucking at said spout, and wherein said second opening is unblocked to allow air to pass through said second opening when the user sucks at said spout.
108. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 96~~, wherein ~~said apparatus comprises a cross-bar in contact with said flexible material~~ claim 88, wherein said apparatus further comprises a second valve, said second valve comprising a second opening and a second blocking element, wherein said second blocking element blocks the flow of air through said second opening when the user is not sucking at said spout, and wherein said second opening is unblocked to allow air to pass through said second opening when the user sucks at said spout.
109. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 97~~ wherein ~~said apparatus comprises a cross-bar in contact with said flexible material~~ claim 93, wherein said apparatus further comprises a second valve, said second valve comprising a second opening and a second blocking element, wherein said second blocking element blocks the flow of air through said second opening when the user is not sucking at said spout, and wherein said second opening

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is unblocked to allow air to pass through said second opening when the user sucks at said spout.

110. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 98~~ wherein ~~said apparatus comprises a cross-bar in contact with said flexible material~~ claim 94, wherein said apparatus further comprises a second valve, said second valve comprising a second opening and a second blocking element, wherein said second blocking element blocks the flow of air through said second opening when the user is not sucking at said spout, and wherein said second opening is unblocked to allow air to pass through said second opening when the user sucks at said spout.
111. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 99~~ wherein ~~said apparatus comprises a cross-bar in contact with said flexible material~~ claim 100, wherein said apparatus further comprises a second valve, said second valve comprising a second opening and a second blocking element, wherein said second blocking element blocks the flow of air through said second opening when the user is not sucking at said spout, and wherein said second opening is unblocked to allow air to pass through said second opening when the user sucks at said spout.
112. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 71~~, wherein ~~said apparatus comprises a T-shaped opening~~ claim 101, wherein said apparatus further comprises a second valve, said second valve comprising a second opening and a second blocking element, wherein said second blocking element blocks the flow of air through said second opening when the user is not sucking at said spout, and wherein said second opening is unblocked to allow air to pass through said second opening when the user sucks at said spout.

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113. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 82~~, wherein said apparatus further comprises a ~~T-shaped opening~~ claim 104, wherein said second opening is smaller than said opening of said flexible material.
114. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 94~~, wherein said apparatus further comprises a ~~T-shaped opening~~ claim 105, wherein said second opening is smaller than said opening of said flexible material.
115. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 96~~, wherein said apparatus further comprises a ~~T-shaped opening~~ claim 106, wherein said second opening is smaller than said opening of said flexible material.
116. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 100~~, wherein said apparatus further comprises a ~~T-shaped opening~~ claim 107, wherein said second opening is smaller than said opening of said flexible material.
117. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 102~~, wherein said apparatus further comprises a ~~T-shaped opening~~ claim 108, wherein said second opening is smaller than said opening of said flexible material.
118. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 111~~, wherein said apparatus further comprises a ~~T-shaped opening~~ claim 109, wherein said second opening is smaller than said opening of said flexible material.
119. (New) A method as claimed in claim 110, wherein said second opening is smaller than said opening of said flexible material.

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120. (New) A method as claimed in claim 111, wherein said second opening is smaller than said opening of said flexible material.
121. (New) A method as claimed in claim 112, wherein said second opening is smaller than said opening of said flexible material.